

Rideshare Operations Recognition

Ridematch Leadership Award

It may not be a widely known fact, but King County Metro Rideshare Operations has taken a leadership role in the Puget Sound region for the last 20 plus years to provide regional ridematch services to employers and commuters.

This includes participation and cost sharing with 5 other transit agency partners: Community Transit, Pierce Transit, Intercity Transit, Kitsap Transit and Island Transit.

With over 1,200 vanpools in the region, Regional Ridematch has provided a key service to vanpoolers to find new riders by calling the Rideshare Hotline at 1-888-814-1300 or by going online at www.RideshareOnline.com. So,

it was with great pride that Rideshare Operations accepted a state recognition award from the Washington State Ridesharing Organization (WSRO) honoring our leadership role for Regional Ridematch. The award was presented at the recent Washington State Department of Transportation conference in Spokane. ♦



Tom Devlin and Julie Paone.

National Service Award

King County Metro Rideshare Operations, Washington State Ferries and Kitsap Transit are partners in the Cross Sound Rideshare Initiatives Project. Since 2002, this project has focused on providing rideshare connections for ferry commuters. In the first year the team has achieved real progress. The ferries on Puget Sound now carry 16 new vanpools, 9 new VanShare groups, and 46 new carpools. The Ridematch file for Peninsula residents has grown 110%.

This performance has brought national acclaim to the project. On September 15th, the Cross Sound Rideshare Initiatives Project team was honored with a national award for Outstanding Service in the Public Sector by the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT).

Rideshare Operations planners Tom Devlin and Julie Paone have been with the project from the beginning. Both describe the project as 'smooth sailing' with the assistance provided by the staff in Rideshare Operations and the enthusiasm of ferry commuters. Congratulations to the project team and the Cross Sound VanPool and VanShare groups supporting great commute choices every day. ♦

Win a Trip to Universal Studios

As vanpoolers you will have the opportunity to win great Rideshare Weeks prizes just by riding in your vanpool during the weeks October 13-24. This year's theme is Rideshare: An Oscar Winning Motion Picture and includes some great prizes.

- ♦ The Grand Prize – A trip for two to Hollywood and Universal Studio
- ♦ Second Prize – A trip for two on Northwest Airlines anywhere in the Continental U.S.

- ♦ Three Third Prizes – A movie night out for two (including dinner, a movie and more at Pacific Place in downtown Seattle, valued at \$100)
- ♦ Four Fourth Prizes – A movie night at home (a \$25 Gift Card from Hollywood Video)
- ♦ And many more...

To submit your entry form for the drawing, simply logon at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/partners/wsro/aboutrideshare.htm> and select the

Rideshare Weeks participation form. Who knows, it could be you heading to Hollywood soon. ♦

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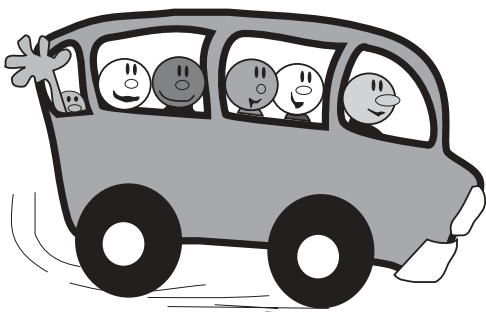
Become a Vanpool Driver and Reap the Benefits

There are many reasons to become a Metro vanpool driver. You might qualify for MasterCard gift cards or vouchers offered in various geographic locations in Puget Sound*. Vans with many drivers don't sit when one driver is sick and the other is on vacation. They don't fold as easily either, helping to ensure you always have a vanpool for your commute. Many groups with multiple drivers rotate driving duties on a "one week on, four weeks off" schedule, giving everyone a chance to simply ride in to work. Throw in personal use of the van for qualified drivers and the fact that most vans are newer models that run great and are comfortable to drive, and you have many strong reasons to become a driver.

Sound good? Metro makes it easy for qualified drivers to become vanpool drivers, offering convenient weekend and weekday orientation classes. Typically, there are three half-day Saturday classes and one Wednesday evening class per month at the Metro van-yard in Redmond. And, once a quarter, Metro reserves the Woodmont Library in Federal Way for a Thursday afternoon class for South Sound drivers.

Now that you know the advantages, call your maintenance rep today and get set up to become a driver. Or, if you want, call our hotline at 206-625-4500 and one of our commuter service specialists will be happy to get you started. ❖

* Bothell,
Redmond



VANPOOL PROFILE

Do You Want To be Selfish?

Did you ever have one of those days when everything seemed right with the world? I have that kind of day every morning that I drive our Eastside vanpool from my house in southwest Redmond to the South Bellevue Park & Ride lot and on to the Dayton Ave. Building and then back home at the end of the workday.



Dean Torkko and Ted Saunders.

My name is Dean Torkko (Environmental Office, Washington State Department of Transportation), and I have 19 years of experience as a vanpool driver and bookkeeper with the King County Metro program. For those of you who have known me for a while, it only seems like "I've been here forever" as the 19 is 57% of my 33 career years. Ted Saunders shares the driving so that the consistency of customer

service to our eleven vanpool participants is maintained when one or more of us are gone. Our mission statement is "to deliver our riders to/from work safely and on time".

As one of over 660 Metro vanpools in the Puget Sound region, our group takes pride in being part of the transportation solution instead of merely being part of the problem in a single occupant vehicle.

I have the following selfish reasons for participating in this fine program:

- I am prolonging the life of my personal vehicle [translates into \$].
- I have special bonding time with friends as we travel. This is especially nice on snow days where there is strength in numbers. One rare day, we hand pushed our van up a slippery freeway ramp [translates into good friendships].
- I am saving money on my personal vehicle insurance bill because I drive it less on a daily basis [translates into \$].
- I enjoy having a reliable vehicle to use as transportation to my "mission critical" employment. Metro has an exceptional preventative maintenance and repair program [translates into "peace of mind"].
- In the rare event of an emergency midday event, the program provides a "Guaranteed Ride Home" [translates into convenience].
- When one of us is driving, that leaves the rest of the riders to enjoy a stress free commute through Seattle. That may include talking, listening to the radio (oldies tunes and the stock market), or merely "checking their eyelids for cracks" [translates into stress reduction].
- The monthly cost of my work commute is drastically reduced with the \$50 subsidy from WSDOT as part of the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Program [translates into \$].

If you want to help your friends and co-workers to become selfish like you and me, then share the great news about your vanpool commute – the one unselfish act. ❖

Vanpool Riders: Have access to a car at the office!

As a vanpool rider, you already know the benefits of a hassle-free commute to work. Now, through a partnership with Flexcar, your vanpool program just got better – a car at the office without driving to the office. Need to run an errand? Have a doctor's appointment? An unexpected client meeting? Now, even if you ride in the vanpool to work, you still have access to a car for these types of trips. Colleen Dunham, a Metro VanPool rider at Microsoft takes a Flexcar from work to her once-a-week ESL class that she teaches. "Using the Flexcar from my work is efficient and it allows me to save time and money." Colleen adds "I use Flexcar at home in the Capitol Hill neighborhood and at Microsoft, it's great."



What is Flexcar?

King County Metro has partnered with Flexcar, the nation's largest provider of hourly-use, on-demand vehicles. Flexcar places cars throughout metropolitan areas, in neighborhoods, in office towers and also at office parks. For \$9 per hour, members can reserve and drive any of these cars whenever and wherever they need. The fee includes gas, insurance, 24-7 emergency service and parking at the reserved Flexcar location.

How it works:

When you join Flexcar, you're given a special Keycard that opens the doors to the cars. Just enter your PIN code in the device inside the car and drive off. On-board computers send your trip data to Flexcar, and you receive a bill at the end of the month.

It's that simple!

Locations

Flexcar has more than 100 vehicles including Honda Civic Hybrids, located in Seattle, Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland, Issaquah and Kitsap County, with new locations being added. Check Flexcar's website (www.flexcar.com) to see if there are vehicles near you, or call 877-FLEXCAR for more information. ❖



HERO Program Leaves "Home" at 19

For almost twenty years, Rideshare Operations has managed and operated the HOV lanes education and enforcement-support program, known as HERO, for the Washington State Department of Transportation.

In 1984, Rideshare was at the table with WSDOT designing HERO. Eleven months later we assumed operations for the State because fostering the integrity of the special use lanes for vanpoolers, carpoolers and bus riders was paramount. Over the years HERO has been credited with:

- Facilitating safe community response to lane violations and providing support to Washington State Patrol enforcement.
- Promoting appropriate use of HOV lanes and furthering ridesharing.
- Helping maintain HOV lanes/ramps viability as incentives to rideshare and riding the bus.

This past July, HERO's operation transferred from Rideshare Operations to WSDOT. After nearly 20 years of service, four computer system changes, quadrupling HOV lane miles, roller-coaster and mostly shoe-string funding and over a million violation reports handled, Rideshare is feeling a little like an empty-nester.

And, as we've said good-bye to HERO, now located just across town, we also need to say many thanks to those of you have contacted the program. Amongst our vanpoolers have been many "regulars" letting us know about violations so we could educate and deter further violation. Your participation has not only helped your vanpool reduce commute time but aided many other HOVers in cars, vans and buses traveling our highways. Three cheers and keep it up! Violation reports can still be made to the Program at (206) 764-HERO (4376) or at www.wsdot.wa.gov/hov/violators. ❖

Great Deals on Used Vans and more...

Metro's Used Van Program

There are numerous benefits to driving a King County Metro VanPool van. Joel Gaither HOV 7527, Troy Johnson HOV 9536 and most recently Frederic Drewien HOV 8376 share the knowledge that one of the benefits is buying a retired VanPool Program van at a generous discount. Each of these VanPool Program drivers has taken advantage of the maximum \$1000 discount available to VanPool drivers and back up drivers based on the length of their time as a driver with the program.

In general, vans are retired after six years of active service. This summer Metro retired 132 1997 Chevy Astro mini vans and replaced them with the same make vehicle in a 2003 model. In addition, 39 1997 Dodge 12-passenger Ram vans will be retired and replaced this fall with new Chevy Express 12-passenger vans and some 1997

15-passenger vans will be retired as well. The majority of these retired vans are for sale to the general public. If you, your friends or family are interested in purchasing or finding out more about specific vans and prices, contact Pam Jones, van sales coordinator at 206-954-6788 for an appointment or visit her website at www.metrovansales.com. If you are interested in a particular van, perhaps one that your group drove, just give Pam the HOV number and she will be happy to try and reunite the two of you.

Keeping Fares Low Through Smart Purchasing

New model vans are purchased for the Program based on a competitive bid process. Specifications are written per OEM (Original Equipment Manufacture) standard and optional equipment and to include some after-market or custom features, such as the passenger side running board, trailer hitch, and the center aisle entry in the larger vans.

Since the Program is required to recover 100 percent of its capital and operating costs through customer fares and the resale of the vans, staff carefully weigh the value of any special feature with its net cost to the customer.

How many and what size of vans to purchase is determined by market demand. For example, in the past

few years customers have been choosing eight and twelve passenger vans at a rate of 18 to 1 over fifteen passenger vans resulting in a 36% decrease in the number of groups using fifteen passenger vans.

Which make of vans are purchased each year is determined by specifications and the lowest competitive bid. Fleet purchasing is a low margin, highly specialized area in the auto industry so many dealers choose not to participate in fleet sales. Competition for the

eight passenger van is limited to Chevrolet Astro and the GMC Safari as General Motors is the only manufacturer of a true eight passenger mini van.

Each year this cycle repeats itself with the goal of providing vanpoolers with vehicles that contribute to rider comfort and convenience while keeping costs down. ♦



Metro VSR Tom Green explains the benefits of purchasing a retired vanpool.

VANPOOL VOICES

If you have questions, comments or story ideas, send them to: Rideshare Operations, YES-TR-0700, King County Metro, 400 Yesler Way, Seattle WA 98104, call (206) 263-4445 or write cathy.blumenthal@metrokc.gov.

*On our website:
VanPool Riders Wanted Bulletin
<http://transit.metrokc.gov>*

www.RideshareOnline.com